

CLAIMS

Amend the application, without prejudice, as follows:

In the Claims:

This following listing of claims replaces all prior listings as presented in the application:

1-24 (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A base for supporting an article during shipping, the article having a series of feet projecting from one side thereof, and the article having a series of peripheral side panels, the base comprising:

a frame having one or more side edges, each side edge adapted to extend along a side of an article,

the base having one or more sockets having internal sidewalls defining wells in the frame that form receptacles for receipt and engagement of feet of the article, each socket having a bottom wall, the bottom wall of the sockets defined by a central portion and a plurality of arms projecting radially outwardly from the central portion to sidewall, each of the arms separated from one another by a hole; and

a plurality of elongated flexible ribs extending vertically along the internal sidewall[[s]] of the sockets from the upper portion of the sidewall to a position adjacent the bottom wall, and projecting inwardly into the well[[s]] of the sockets, the ribs adapted to deflect and resiliently deform in response to the engagement with the feet of the article upon insertion into the sockets, to retain secure the base secured to the article and to align the side edges of the frame adjacent the peripheral side panels of the appliance; and

~~a hole defined in the bottom wall of each socket,~~ the holes in the bottom wall being disposed below ~~each of the~~ a corresponding rib[[s]] within the socket, the holes being dimensioned and configured to provide separation between a bottom edge of each rib and the bottom wall of the socket.

26. (Previously Presented) A base as claimed in claim 25 for supporting a four-sided article, wherein the frame has four sides, each side adapted to extend along one of the four side panels of the article with relatively outer peripheral edge portions of the base positioned adjacent bottom surfaces of the article.

27. (Previously Presented) A base as claimed in claim 26, wherein an outer peripheral edge of each of the sides of the frame is recessed relative to an inner portion of the base along the corresponding side panel, creating a gap between the base and adjacent portions of the article along each side thereof.

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Currently Amended) A base as claimed in claim [[28]] 25, wherein the ribs are beveled at their upper edges adjacent the open end of the wells.

30-31. (Cancelled)

32. (Previously Presented) A base as claimed in claim 25, wherein a relatively outer peripheral edge portion of at least one side of the frame is recessed relative to inner portions of the frame along the at least one side, the recess of the outer edge portion along the at least one side creating a gap between the base and adjacent portions of the article.

33-36. (Cancelled)

37. (Currently Amended) A base as claimed in claim [[33]] 45, wherein the ribs are beveled adjacent the upper edge of the socket to facilitate insertion of the foot of the appliance into the socket.

38-44. (Cancelled)

45. (Currently Amended) A base for supporting an article during shipping, the article having a series of feet projecting from one side thereof, and the article having a series of peripheral side panels, the base comprising:

a frame having one or more side edges, each side edge adapted to extend along a side of an article,

the base having one or more sockets each having an internal sidewall and defining a well in the frame that forms a receptacle for receipt and engagement of the feet of the article, each socket having a bottom wall,

the bottom wall of the socket defined by a central portion and a plurality of arms projecting radially outwardly from the central portion to the sidewall, each of the arms separated from one another by holes; and

a plurality of flexible ribs extending axially along the internal sidewall of the sockets and projecting inwardly into the well of the sockets, the ribs adapted to deflect and resiliently deform in response to the engagement with the feet of the article upon insertion into the sockets, to secure the base to the article and to align the side edges of the frame adjacent the peripheral side panels of the appliance,

the holes in the bottom wall of the sockets being disposed below a corresponding rib within the socket, the holes being dimensioned and configured to provide separation between a bottom edge of the ribs and the bottom wall of the socket A base as claimed in claim 25,

wherein the bottom wall of the socket is disposed above a bottom of the base.

46. (Cancelled)

47. (Currently Amended) A base as claimed in claim 25, wherein the central portion of the bottom wall of ~~the~~ each socket further comprises a bulge projecting upward from the bottom wall of ~~each~~ the socket, the bulge being structured to resist movement of a foot of an appliance below the bottom edges of the ribs.

48. (Currently Amended) A base as claimed in claim ~~[[33]]~~ 45, wherein the side edges extend sufficiently ~~[[far]]~~ outward from the inner portion of the frame so that side panels of an appliance disposed on the base will be disposed substantially over the side edges.

49. (Currently Amended) A base for shipping and supporting an appliance, the appliance having a series of feet projecting from the bottom surface thereof, and the appliance having a series of peripheral side panels, the base comprising:

a frame having one or more side edges and a central opening, the side edges adapted to extend along a side panel of an appliance, the side edges having a top surface disposed below a top surface of an inner portion of the base, whereby the frame resists contact between a side edge and a peripheral side panel of an appliance disposed on the frame upon upward bending of a portion of the frame,

the base having at least one socket that defines a well for receipt of a foot of the appliance;

a plurality elongated flexible ribs extending vertically along an internal sidewall of the socket and radially projecting inwardly into the well, the ribs adapted to deform in response to engagement with the foot of the appliance upon insertion into the socket to grip the foot of the appliance and to maintain the appliance and the base together, and A base as claimed in claim 33, further comprising

a bottom wall within each the socket, the bottom wall having a central portion and a plurality of projecting arms extending outwardly from the central portion to the sidewall of the socket, the projecting arms separated from one another by and a hole defined in the bottom wall of each socket, the holes being disposed below each of the ribs within the socket, the holes providing being dimensioned and configured to provide separation between a bottom edge of each rib and the bottom wall of the socket.

50. (Currently Amended) A base as claimed in claim 49, wherein the bottom wall of the socket is disposed above a bottom of the base.

51. (Currently Amended) A base as claimed in claim 49, wherein the bottom wall of the socket is disposed above a bottom of the base; whereby additional cushioning is provided by the base for an appliance disposed on the base.

52. (Currently Amended) A base as claimed in claim 49, wherein the bottom wall of the socket further comprises a bulge projecting upward from the central portion ~~bottom wall of each socket~~, the bulge being structured to resist movement of a foot of an appliance below the bottom edges of the ribs.